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Illinois' Graduated Driver Licensing System

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GEORGE H. RYAN
Secretary of State



Better Training For New Responsibilities

Getting a driver's permit or license is one of the most exciting events in a teenager's life. But along with this new privilege comes a lot of responsibility.

Unfortunately, teenagers are more likely to die in car crashes than any other age group. Although teenagers make up only 6 percent of all Illinois drivers, they account for 16 percent of all crash fatalities.

These troubling statistics led to the creation of a graduated driver licensing system in Illinois called "Graduate to Safety." Without raising the driving age, this plan gets young people who have proven themselves to be poor drivers off the road and into further training and also gets parents more involved in preparing their teens to drive responsibly.

This brochure explains the components of "Graduate to Safety," which goes into effect Jan. 1, 1998, and answers some of the most commonly asked questions about the program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George H. Ryan". The signature is written in black ink on a light background.

GEORGE H. RYAN
Secretary of State

"Graduate to Safety" Graduated Licensing System

Effective Jan. 1, 1998

Permit Phase — Drivers Age 15

- Parental consent necessary to obtain permit
- Must be enrolled in approved driver education course and must pass vision and knowledge tests
- Permit is valid for two years and must be held for a minimum of three months before a license is granted
- Practice driving must be supervised by parent or adult age 21 or older
- All occupants under age 18 must wear safety belts
- Number of passengers limited to one in front seat and to the number of safety belts in back seat
- 11 p.m. curfew Sunday-Thursday; midnight Friday and Saturday (local curfews may differ)
- Legal blood alcohol content (BAC) limit is .00

Sanctions

- Limit of one court supervision for serious offenses
- Unlicensed individuals convicted of a serious moving violation must continue to drive on a learner's permit for six months before obtaining license
- Not eligible for a restricted driving permit or a judicial driving permit
- Individuals age 15 and under caught driving without a permit ineligible to obtain license until age 18

Initial Licensing Phase — Drivers Age 16-17

- Parental consent required to obtain license; parent must verify that a minimum 25 hours of behind-the-wheel practice have taken place
- All occupants under age 18 must wear safety belts
- Number of passengers limited to one in front seat and to the number of safety belts in back seat
- 11 p.m. curfew Sunday-Thursday; midnight Friday and Saturday only for 16-year-olds
- Legal blood alcohol content (BAC) limit is .00

Sanctions

- Limit of one court supervision for serious offenses
- Conviction of *any* moving violation before age 18 generates Secretary of State warning letter to parent and teen
- Second conviction of *any* moving violation before age 18 results in minimum one-month license suspension, with a longer suspension for subsequent violations
- Suspended drivers required to attend remedial driver education course, pay \$30 reinstatement fee, and be retested

Full Licensing Phase — Drivers Age 18-20

- Legal blood alcohol content (BAC) limit is .00

Sanctions

- Limit of one court supervision for serious offenses
- Conviction of two moving violations in 24-month period results in minimum one-month suspension, with a longer suspension for subsequent violations
- Suspended drivers required to pay \$30 reinstatement fee

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Does a graduated driver licensing system raise the minimum age at which an individual may apply for a driver's license?

A: Absolutely not. Under "Graduate to Safety," 16 remains the age at which a teen who has successfully completed driver education may apply for a driver's license. The graduated system establishes additional training requirements during the instruction permit phase, resulting in better trained 16-year-old drivers.

Q: Is a graduated driver licensing system necessary in Illinois?

A: Yes. Statistics show that an alarming number of young drivers are involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes. Teenagers make up only 6 percent of Illinois' total driving population, yet they account for 16 percent of all automobile deaths. Factors contributing to this high fatality rate include young drivers' lack of experience and their greater tendency to take risks. Through "Graduate to Safety," teen drivers receive more training, and those who prove to be unsafe drivers are taken off the road for additional training before they can become fully licensed.

Q: Have graduated driver licensing systems been effective in other states?

A: Yes. Graduated driver licensing systems have proven effective in reducing the number of traffic crashes and convictions among young people in other states. Maryland has seen a 5 percent reduction in automobile crashes and a 10 percent reduction in traffic convictions. California has experienced a 4 percent reduction in automobile crashes and a 20 percent reduction in convictions.

Q: How does "Graduate to Safety" get parents more involved in preparing teens to drive?

A: "Graduate to Safety" sets guidelines that encourage parents to take an active role in preparing their teens for their first driver's license. Before a teen can obtain a driver's license, the teen's parent or guardian must certify in writing that the teen has practiced behind-the-wheel driving for a minimum of 25 hours with a responsible adult who is at least 21 years old and has at least one year driving experience. This driving practice is a supplement to the behind-the-wheel instruction teens receive in driver education class.

Q: Why does "Graduate to Safety" limit the number of passengers in a car driven by a teen?

A: Drivers in the permit phase and the initial licensing phase are limited to one passenger in the front seat and to the number of safety belts in the back seat. This restriction reduces the likelihood that the driver will be distracted by a car full of fellow teens. Limiting the number of passengers to the number of safety belts also helps to ensure that everyone in the car is properly restrained.

For more information on
"Graduate to Safety,"
please call
(217) 785-0440
or write

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